



**AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR
Suicide Prevention**

Understanding and preventing suicide through
research, education, and advocacy

Risk Factors and Warning Signs

Nearly 40,000 people die by suicide in the U.S. each year. However, no one needs to die by suicide. Suicide is preventable.

Today, only 1 in 5 people suffering from a mental illness get treatment. If we encourage more people – say even 3 out of every 5 people—to seek treatment, we will make a huge difference in improving mental health and reducing suicide.

Take a moment to learn about:

Warning Signs

Risk Factors

What To Do If You Suspect Someone Is At Risk For Suicide.

Warning Signs

People who kill themselves exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do. The more warnings, the greater the risk.

Talk

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves.
- Having no reason to live.
- Being a burden to others.
- Seeking revenge.
- Feeling trapped.
- Unbearable pain.

Behavior

A person's suicide risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased, especially if it's related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs.
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- Acting recklessly.
- Withdrawing from activities.
- Sleeping too much or too little.
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possession.

Suffering from Panic attacks.

Risk Factors

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take their life. The more risk factors, the higher the risk.

Environmental Factors

Contagion would include exposure to another person's suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide.

Access to Lethal Means including firearms and drugs.

Prolonged Stress Factors which may include harassment, bullying, relationship problems, and unemployment.

Stressful Life Events which may include a death, divorce, or job loss.

Medical Factors

Mental Health Problems.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Historical Factors

Previous Suicide Attempts.

Family History of Suicide Attempts.

If You Suspect Someone Is At Risk For Suicide

Take it seriously.

Do not leave them alone.

Have them call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Help them remove lethal means like firearms and drugs.

Call or escort them to an emergency room, counseling service, or psychiatrist.

In an emergency, call 911.



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Programs for Teens and Young Adults

AFSP's programs for teens and young adults cover a variety of different topics that range from educating teens to recognize the signs and symptoms of depression in themselves and others, how suicide-related problems are commonly experienced by college students, to providing information and guidance to schools that have been touched by the tragedy of a suicide.

AFSP developed the following programs with this key goal in mind, to help increase the knowledge and understanding of suicidal behavior in youth—its causes, treatment, and prevention.

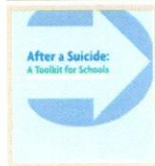
More Than Sad: Teen Depression [/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-teens-and-young-adults/more-than-sad-teen-depression]



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More Than Sad: Teen Depression educates high school students about depression, the leading risk factor for suicide in both adults and teens. Presenting vignettes of four teens that were treated for depression, this educational program aims to teach adolescents to recognize depression in themselves or their friends, and to encourage them to seek help.

After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools [/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-teens-and-young-adults/after-a-suicide-a-toolkit-for-schools]



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After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools provides information, tools, and guidance to schools that have been touched by the tragedy of a suicide. The Toolkit covers Crisis Response, Helping Students Cope, Working with the Community, Memorialization, Social Media, Suicide Contagion, and Bringing in Outside Help.

[Suicide Shouldn't Be a Secret PSAs \[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-teens-and-young-adults/suicide-shouldn-t-be-a-secret-psas\]](#)



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Suicide Shouldn't Be a Secret is a series of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) aimed at promoting suicide prevention among teens and their parents. They educate about the warning signs of depression in young people, and identify action steps that can be taken to get help for someone who may be suicidal.

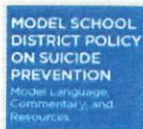
[The Truth about Suicide: Real Stories of Depression in College \[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-teens-and-young-adults/the-truth-about-suicide-real-stories-of-depression-in-college\]](#)



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The Truth about Suicide: Real Stories of Depression in College is an educational tool designed to achieve several specific goals related to suicide prevention: educate college students and other young adults to recognize the signs and symptoms of depression in themselves and others; convey the destigmatizing notion that depression and other mental illnesses are real illnesses that respond to specific treatments; promote the importance and acceptability of seeking help for a friend or for oneself; and provide information about sources of professional help and ways to self-refer for treatment or assist a peer in getting help.

[A Model School Policy on Suicide Prevention \[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-teens-and-young-adults/a-model-school-policy-on-suicide-prevention\]](#)



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Four leading organizations have come together to release a Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention. This modular, adaptable document will help educators and school administrators implement comprehensive suicide prevention policies in communities nationwide. When suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth as young as 10 through age-19, it is crucial that our school districts have proactive suicide prevention policies in place.



Community Programs

AFSP's community programs are designed to create a comprehensive awareness of how communities can play a role into the further understanding of suicide—its causes, treatment, and prevention.

Our programs seek to improve the knowledge of the public and to help communities succeed in establishing support networks that can effectively reduce suicidal rates.

[Involving Families in LGBT Youth Suicide Prevention \[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/community-programs/involving-families-in-lgbt-youth-suicide-prevention\]](#)



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AFSP partnered with the Family Acceptance Project (FAP) to launch a pilot educational program aimed to educate parents and other adults about the key role families play in reducing suicide risk in LGBT youth and promoting their health, safety and well-being.

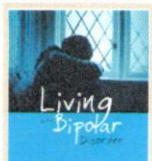
[Depression and Bipolar Awareness: From Diagnosis to Remission \[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/community-programs/depression-and-bipolar-awareness-from-diagnosis-to-remission\]](#)



[\[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/community-programs/depression-and-bipolar-awareness-from-diagnosis-to-remission\]](#)

The first in AFSP's educational series on mental disorders, the Depression and Bipolar Awareness: From Diagnosis to Remission program includes a one-hour film that features medical experts and a panel of patients and family members talking about their experiences with depression and bipolar disorder, the benefits of treatment, and the recovery process.

[Living with Bipolar Disorder \[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/community-programs/living-with-bipolar-disorder\]](#)



[\[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/community-programs/living-with-bipolar-disorder\]](#)

The second in AFSP's educational series on mental disorders, the Living with Bipolar Disorder program includes a 40-minute film that addresses the misinformation that clouds our understanding of bipolar disorder.

Billboard Program [/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/community-programs/billboard-program]



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AFSP's Billboard Program alerts communities that depression is serious and urges people who are depressed to consult their doctor.



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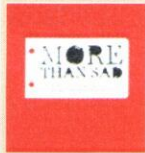
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Programs for Professionals

AFSP developed the following programs to help professionals increase their knowledge and understanding of suicidal behavior in a variety of populations, including teens and young adults, medical students and physicians, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons.

Our programs seek to help those working with these populations learn how they can play a role in suicide prevention.

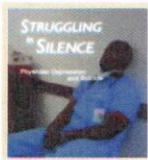
More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel [\[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-professionals/more-than-sad-suicide-prevention-education-for-teachers-and-other-school-personnel\]](/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-professionals/more-than-sad-suicide-prevention-education-for-teachers-and-other-school-personnel)



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More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel is an educational program to help teachers and other school personnel learn more about teen suicide and how they can play a role in its prevention. The program is designed to comply with state requirements or recommendations for teacher education in suicide prevention, and can be used for group trainings or individual study.

Physician and Medical Student Depression and Suicide [\[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-professionals/physician-and-medical-student-depression-and-suicide\]](/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-professionals/physician-and-medical-student-depression-and-suicide)



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Struggling in Silence: Physician Depression and Suicide and Out of the Silence: Medical Student Depression and Suicide are educational programs designed to address depression and suicide among physicians. Physicians frequently fail to recognize their own depression and that of their colleagues. Even when they do recognize that they are depressed, many physicians avoid treatment. One tragic result is suicide.

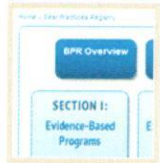
[LGBT Suicide and Suicide Risk: From Knowledge to Prevention \[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-professionals/lgbt-suicide-and-suicide-risk-from-knowledge-to-prevention\]](#)



[\[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-professionals/lgbt-suicide-and-suicide-risk-from-knowledge-to-prevention\]](#)

AFSP's broad initiative to increase knowledge about suicide and suicide risk in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons, and take steps to reduce that risk.

[Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention \[/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-professionals/best-practices-registry-for-suicide-prevention\]](#)



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Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention is collaboration between AFSP and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center that informs those working to prevent suicide about evidence-based programs, protocols for program and policy development, and materials, policies, and practices that likely meet stated objectives and safety standards.